

Statement on Strengthening the Drinking Water Standard for Arsenic January 17, 2001

When we turn on our taps, Americans expect the water that comes out to be clean and safe. Access to clean, safe water is fundamental to our quality of life. That is why my administration has made providing clean, safe tap water to all communities a top priority. As a result, since 1993, the number of Americans receiving tap water that meets tough Federal health standards has increased by 23 million.

Today I am pleased that this administration is taking further action to improve the quality of our drinking water by strengthening the drinking water standard for arsenic. This new drinking water standard will provide additional public health protections for 13 million Americans, including protections from cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems.

My administration has worked hard to ensure that Americans enjoy the safest drinking water in the world. I proposed and, in 1996, signed

amendments to significantly strengthen the Safe Drinking Water Act. In implementing this new law, my administration has already provided added protections for consumers from dangerous, disease-causing microbes such as *Cryptosporidium*, preventing as many as 460,000 cases of illness a year. We have ensured that Americans have the information they need to make important public health decisions for themselves and their families by requiring that 55,000 water systems provide new annual reports to their customers on the quality of their drinking water. And recognizing that good water quality comes at a cost, we have established the first-ever fund for drinking water system improvements, providing States with \$3.6 billion, to date, in low interest loans for treatment system construction and upgrades.

Together with the new action we are taking today, these steps will ensure that our families continue to enjoy safe, clean drinking water.

Statement on Child Support Enforcement Efforts January 17, 2001

Today the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released new data showing that our administration's tough child support enforcement efforts have been effective and are paying off for our children. Child support collections broke new records in 2000, collecting \$18 billion, an increase of \$10 billion since 1992. The new data today also shows that in 2000 alone, nearly 700,000 delinquent noncustodial parents were matched to more than one million financial records and that through withholding tax refunds, a record \$1.4 billion in overdue child support was collected, twice the amount collected when I took office.

Our administration's commitment to work with States to efficiently and effectively hold noncustodial parents accountable for their child support obligations has demonstrated significant improvement over the last 8 years. Today, parents who owe child support have their wages

garnished, their Federal loans and passports denied, their bank accounts seized, and their tax refunds withheld. Last year alone, nearly 3.5 million delinquent noncustodial parents were located through the National Directory of New Hires posting.

In addition, Welfare to Work grants have helped States, tribes, and communities nationwide have created programs that help low income, noncustodial fathers get and keep jobs that will allow them to pay child support and provide their children emotional support. Congress just enacted my proposal to extend these grants for an additional 2 years.

Despite these tremendous gains, there is still more to do. In my FY 2001 budget, I proposed the fathers work/families win initiative to help low income fathers and families work and support their children, along with needed reforms to the child support system. I urge the next

administration and the 107th Congress to take action this year to promote responsible fatherhood and ensure that more child support goes directly to families.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting a Certification Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 17, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), "Effectiveness of Australia Group," that:

Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors; dual-use processing equipment human, animal, and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons applications; and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and

The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary of January 18.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

January 17, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Attached is a report to the Congress on cost-sharing arrangements, as required by Condition 4(A) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 18.